
The Future of North Atlantic Treaty Organization

By

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I would like to begin by thanking you and other members of this Committee and the Senate for your strong and consistent support for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which has helped ensure it remains the greatest alliance in history. It has been a privilege and my good fortune to have had the opportunity to consult with you and take your advice over the years on NATO. I look forward to continuing this dialogue and consultation in the future. I appreciate your invitation today at a time when the future of NATO is being actively discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. I welcome this debate. Our governments, our parliaments and our public ought to talk about the future of NATO. That is what democratically supported foreign and defense policy is all about.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 and NATO's response prove to me NATO's continuing value in a world of new and unpredictable threats. Invoking Article 5 for the first time in history, NATO sent a clear message that the alliance is united and determined. We greatly value NATO's collective response, as well as the contributions of individual allies. Fifty years of NATO cooperation made natural the participation of allied forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) have logged over 3,000 hours patrolling American skies. All NATO allies have provided blanket overflight rights, access to ports and bases, refueling assistance, and stepped up intelligence efforts. Sixteen of our allies are supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle with military forces and capabilities. Fourteen allies have deployed forces in the region, and nine are participating in combat operations with us in eastern Afghanistan as we speak.

Almost all contributors to the International Security Assistance Force, initially led by Britain and soon by Turkey, are current allies, aspiring allies, or countries who have trained with NATO in the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Their varied contributions include air reconnaissance, refueling, cargo, and close air support missions, special forces missions, specialized nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons units, mine clearing and medical units, and naval patrols. Altogether allies and partners have deployed nearly 4,000 troops to Afghanistan.

NATO's actions in response to September 11, 2001 come as no surprise to me. Throughout its history, NATO has adapted to meet new threats and seize new opportunities. NATO still matters. Nothing illustrates this fact better than the number of countries seeking to join. Secretary Powell made this point last week, observing that countries want to join "because they want to be a part of a political and security organization that is anchored in its relationship with North America."

NATO Today: Enduring Values and Common Purposes. When President Bush and his counterparts meet in Prague later this year, their gathering will symbolize the changes that have taken place in Europe and NATO's central role in making these changes possible.

Prague: Once Behind an Iron Curtain. Prague: synonymous in a famous spring in 1968 with rebellion against oppression and thirst for democracy. And in 1991, Prague hosted the

meeting that dissolved the Warsaw Pact. In 2002, NATO leaders will come to Prague to continue shaping that new Europe and to reaffirm the strength, unity and vitality of the Atlantic Alliance.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization remains a fundamental pillar of our foreign and defense policy. As President Bush said last month, NATO remains “an anchor of security for both Europe and the United States.”

I have just returned from meeting with all of our Allies at NATO. I then traveled to eight Allied capitals to consult on our agenda for Prague. We proposed that Prague be defined by three themes: New Capabilities, New Members, and New Relationships.

21st Century NATO: New Capabilities, New Members, New Relationships. September 11, 2001 has brought home to us how dangerous our world has become. Czechoslovakia President Vaclav Havel, who will host the Prague Summit, observed that September 11, 2001 “alerted us to the evil existing in this world.” September 11, 2001 has also demonstrated how important our allies are in helping to defeat the new threats that face us. To protect our way of life, the alliance must be an effective tool in the world after September 11, 2001. That is why NATO ministers agreed last December to intensify common efforts to meet the threats from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction that all allies face. When President Bush meets with allied leaders in Prague later this year, we expect that our allies will approve an action plan aimed at enhancing NATO’s ability to deal with these and other threats.

NATO Is Not Less Important to Our Security Today, NATO Is More Important. Our agenda at Prague will be threefold:

- Ensuring NATO has the capabilities needed to meet emerging new threats,
- Extending NATO membership to more new European democracies, and
- Renewing NATO relationships with Russia, Ukraine and other Partners.

This agenda is rooted in NATO’s values and goals as set out in the *1949 Washington Treaty* to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of our peoples, live in peace with all peoples and governments, and promote the stability and well-being of the North Atlantic area.

New Capabilities

Since the end of the Cold War, the alliance has taken steps to revise its doctrine and improve its command and force structures to meet today's threats. The 1999 Strategic Concept defined these new threats explicitly, noting that “new risks to Euro-Atlantic peace and stability were becoming clearer oppression, ethnic conflict, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the global spread of weapons technology and terrorism.”

While we have recognized the new threats, we have more to do to prepare NATO to meet them. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks demonstrated that the threats to allies and to our alliance can come from anywhere, at any time, employing devices ranging from a box cutter to weapons of mass destruction. In order to defend ourselves against these new threats, NATO needs to be able to deploy at short notice flexible, well-armed forces capable of conducting sustained operations across a range of military options.

While the U.S. currently possesses forces with such capabilities, in large measure our European allies do not. I believe the growing capabilities gap between the United States and Europe is the most serious long-term problem facing NATO and must be addressed. In order to fight effectively alongside the U.S., our European allies need flexible, sustainable forces, able to move long distances quickly and deliver overwhelming firepower on arrival. This will require

improved strategic lift and modern precision strike capabilities, as well as enhanced combat support and combat service support. Unless the disparity is substantially narrowed, NATO will be increasingly less able to play its part in countering the threats that now face us.

At Prague, NATO must begin to redress this imbalance by agreeing to steps aimed at improving overall Alliance capabilities. These will include further streamlining NATO's command structure to make it more responsive to today's threats and a commitment to provide the deployable, capable and ready forces NATO needs.

We are seeking a comprehensive improvement in European military capabilities. Although the Director Central Intelligence initiative identified many areas where improvements were needed, much remains to be done to fulfill its goals. We need to sharpen and narrow our focus. Increased defense spending remains an important goal, and we believe allies can also use resources more effectively by greater pooling of their efforts. Among the proposals we would favor is creation of a European Mobility Command to coordinate existing and future European airlift assets.

Afghanistan has also demonstrated the importance of Special Operations Forces in combined land-air operations. To enhance NATO capabilities in this area we will also propose creation of a Special Operations Coordination Center at SHAPE.

NATO must also develop the means to defend its forces and members against weapons of mass destruction fielded either by rogue states or terrorist groups or by some combination of the two. Here we have proposed initiatives on biological weapons defense and bio-terrorism and will soon offer proposals on missile defense.

New Members

Our second goal for Prague is to continue the process of building a united Euro-Atlantic community by extending membership to those democratic European countries who have demonstrated their determination and ability to defend the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. As the President observed last year in Warsaw, "Yalta did not ratify a natural divide, it divided a living civilization." He made it clear that his goal is to erase the false lines that have divided Europe and to "welcome into Europe's home" every European nation that struggles toward democracy, free markets, and a strong civic culture. The process of enlargement to Europe's new democracies launched in 1997 has fulfilled NATO's promise and brought us closer to completing the vision of NATO's founders of a free and united Europe. But our work is not done.

In his first meeting with allies last June, the President secured a consensus to take concrete, historic decisions at Prague to advance enlargement. We take as guidance the President's view that NATO "should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to advance the cause of freedom."

We have been working with allies and the nine current aspirant countries to strengthen their preparations. A team led by Nick Burns, a U.S. Ambassador to NATO, visited the aspirant countries earlier this year to reinforce the importance of addressing key reform priorities in the months before Prague. Our team came away from its meetings impressed by the commitment of the aspirants to meeting their Membership Action Plan goals and advancing reforms, even while recognizing that they all have serious work ahead to prepare for membership. We have told aspirants that the U.S. has made no decision on which countries to support for membership, and we have urged them to accelerate their reforms between now and Prague. Members of this

committee and the rest of the Senate will rightly ask what capabilities and contributions potential new members will bring to the alliance.

The Washington Treaty makes clear that states invited to join NATO should be in a position to further the principles of the treaty and contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. This is the standard that we and our allies will apply as we approach decisions at Prague. Many aspirants have already demonstrated their determination to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security and stability. The Vilnius Group, meeting in Sofia last October declared its shared intention to “fully support the war against terrorism” and to “act as allies of the United States.” Aspirants have offered overflight rights, transit and basing privileges, military and police forces, medical units and transport support to U.S. efforts. Most will participate in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Most aspirant countries have also contributed actively to NATO efforts to prevent further hostilities in the Balkans.

Some have asked in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 whether enlargement should remain a priority. I believe the answer is “yes.” The events of September 11, 2001 have reinforced the importance of closer cooperation and integration between the United States and all the democracies of Europe. If we are to meet new threats to our security, we need to build the broadest and strongest coalition possible of countries that share our values and are able to act effectively with us. With freedom under attack, we must demonstrate our resolve to do as much as we can to advance its cause. It is our goal and expectation that, working with you, we will be able to forge a solid and united approach to enlargement and build an equally strong consensus with the alliance. We welcome the support from members of this committee for the *Freedom Consolidation Support Act*, and believe that a solid bipartisan majority behind this bill will send a message of our commitment to an enlarged and strengthened Alliance. We look forward to the closest consultations with the Congress on this subject and to the debate in the Senate on ratification as we approach these historic decisions.

New Relationships

Our third goal for Prague is also aimed at advancing NATO’s core principles, those of living in peace with all peoples and promoting stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. As we work to complete the vision of a united Europe from which, Winston Churchill once observed, “no nation should be permanently outcast,” we must continue to reach out and expand cooperation and integration with all of NATO’s partners.

NATO and Russia have taken steps to give new impetus and direction to their extensive cooperation in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. President Bush’s vision is of a Russia “fully reformed, fully democratic, and closely bound to the rest of Europe,” which is able to build partnerships with Europe’s great institutions, including NATO.

NATO is now working with Russia to complete negotiations on creation of a new body the NATO-Russia Council that will permit joint decisions and actions in areas of common interest. At the upcoming Reykjavik ministerial, we are optimistic that Secretary of State Colin Powell will conclude with his colleagues the agreement on the new structure. To acknowledge the potential significance of the new relationship, President Bush will join NATO and Russian leaders at a summit May 28 in Italy to inaugurate the NATO-Russia Council.

Here’s what the proposed NATO-Russia Council will do:

- It will focus on practical, well-defined projects where NATO and Russia share a common purpose and a common goal;

- It will offer Russia the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of cooperative mechanisms in areas such as counter-terrorism, nonproliferation, and civil emergency preparedness;

Here is what the NATO-Russia Council will not do:

- The new body will not give Russia the ability to veto NATO actions in any areas;
- It is not a back door to NATO membership;
- It will not infringe on NATO prerogatives. NATO members will continue to take any decision by consensus on any issue.

The NATO-Russia Council will be fully separate from the NAC, which will continue to meet and make decisions as it always has on the full range of issues on NATO's agenda.

While forging new links with Russia, our cooperative vision for NATO embraces all of NATO's partners, including Ukraine, countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Mediterranean Dialogue partners.

Our distinctive partnership with Ukraine has helped ensure that Ukraine continues to progress along the reform path and expand its links to the West. Ukraine has signaled its desire for closer integration with NATO. NATO has made clear to Ukraine the need for greater substantive progress in a number of areas. At Prague, we should welcome Ukraine's interest while looking to develop initiatives aimed at concrete results in strategic areas of common interest.

We want to focus at Prague on NATO's partner activities with countries of Central Asia that have played such constructive roles in the war against terrorism. The Partnership for Peace and EAPC have been successful vehicles for integration, but we believe that much more can be done to expand cooperation between NATO and these countries. Through the PfP, NATO can help build reformed, stable, democratic societies in Central Asia and the Caucasus. We need to make sure PfP programs and resources are tailored to their needs, so that they can develop the forces and training they need to meet common threats and strengthen stability.

Nearly fifty-three years after its creation, NATO remains the core of the United States commitment to Europe and the bedrock of our security. NATO has kept peace in Europe for over half a century, it continues to provide for Allies conventional and nuclear defense, and it is the nexus of cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia and the Caucasus. No other organization can fulfill these roles.

A Europe whole, free and at peace is a goal fast becoming a reality thanks to NATO. We and our Allies have much work ahead, but also an historic opportunity to achieve our goals of defending, integrating, and stabilizing the Euro-Atlantic area and continuing to strengthen this greatest of Alliances. As we look to Prague and our agenda of new capabilities, new members, and new relationships, we look forward to working closely with members of this Committee to ensure that NATO will meet tomorrow's challenges.